

Have You Seen La Nueva Mujer Revolucionaria Puertorriquena?

**The Poetry and Lives
of Revolutionary
Puerto Rican Women.**

New Movement in Solidarity with the Puerto Rican & Mexican Revolutions

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Dedicated to the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War
for their example
and their dedication to the defeat of U.S. imperialism.

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INTRODUCTION

Most of us know very little about the new Puerto Rican revolutionary woman or her many foremothers in Puerto Rican history. This book is an introduction to some of these women through their poetry and the examples of their lives. The women who wrote these poems are not only poets, they are revolutionary leaders, freedom fighters, Prisoners of War, mothers, teachers, TV producers, seamstresses, and more. Most importantly, they are all a crucial part of the Puerto Rican independence struggle.

As a group of white anti-imperialist women, we produced this book because of our solidarity with the Puerto Rican Independence movement and our understanding that its challenge to U.S. imperialism is relevant to our own lives. We know we have a special responsibility to this struggle because it was the U.S. that militarily invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 and it is U.S. force of arms that has maintained the island as a colony ever since. What makes Puerto Rico so valuable to the U.S.? In addition to billions of tax-free dollars stolen from the labor of Puerto Rican workers each year by multinational corporations, the U.S. is developing its exploitation of the island's natural resources, especially the deposits of copper and nickel (crucial for armament construction). Strategic military bases at Roosevelt Roads and the Puerto Rican island of Vieques are essential to U.S. control of the Caribbean and the South-east Atlantic, and serve as the training grounds and launching pad for U.S. intervention in the Americas.

Decades of struggle and resistance, in which both legal and illegal resistance have been met with increasing repression, have shown that only a military victory will drive the colonizers out of Puerto Rico. Today, beginning stages of People's War bring Puerto Rico closer to its dream of national liberation. This war is being waged by armed clandestine organizations both on the island and inside the U.S. (After the U.S. destroyed the island's economy, over 1/3 of the Puerto Rican population was forced to migrate to the U.S. to find work. A second front of the growing war was opened up by Puerto Ricans who face the same harsh colonial relationship here in the "promised land" and who see no solution short of the liberation of their homeland.) This People's War touches our lives not only because of its geographical proximity, but because its victory means a real blow to the biggest enemy of the world's peoples—U.S. imperialism. We look to the women and men of the Puerto Rican Independence struggle as leaders in bringing us a step closer to a world free of exploitation and as a challenge for us to take up the same battle with equal commitment.

The women producing this book have strong roots in the newly reborn women's movement of the 60's and 70's, where much of our political growth occurred. Pushed by our work in solidarity with Puerto Rico, we have come to understand that there can be no women's liberation under this imperialist system that thrives on our oppression, and so we define imperialism as our enemy. Our identity as anti-imperialist women is shaped by our commitment now to the day-to-day battles for women's liberation, as well as by our vision of socialist revolution that demands a



77 year old Isabel Rosado, protesting U.S. Navy occupation of Vieques, Puerto Rico in May, 1979.

new woman and a new man. Under imperialism, which saps the strength of women instead of nurturing it, revolutionary Puerto Rican women are an example of what it means to be a liberated woman. Their actions prove that women don't have to accept the state's terms for our lives or our resistance. Like the women of Nicaragua and Zimbabwe, their lives demonstrate the power and determination of women who are transformed by their participation in the destruction of empire. They show us that women will no longer be ruled by fear—we can be warriors.

PUERTO RICAN WOMEN IN STRUGGLE

The revolutionary Puerto Rican woman is not a new development or an isolated phenomenon. Most of us know about Lolita Lebrón, the courageous compañera who served over two decades in prison for leading an armed attack on the U.S. Congress in 1952 in order to expose U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. Such women have always been a part of the Puerto Rican Independence movement, as Alejandrina Torres of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War explains: "Mariana Bracetti not only sewed the flag of Lares, but was an active member of the secret society. She travelled through Puerto Rico before 1868, organizing cells and carrying messages between the revolutionary centers. Luisa Capetillo was one of the founders

of the Puerto Rican labor movement during the first decade of the present century. Together with Juana Colon they led militant demonstrations for the rights of Puerto Rican workers and defined the role of women in the struggle as one of absolute equality. The armed movement for liberation has also seen women in leadership roles. Blanca Canales led the armed column which took Jayuya in 1950, the only town to be liberated and the last to fall to the enemy. Isabel Rosado, an heroic combatant in the 1950 insurrection, today at 77 years of age continues to occupy the front lines of struggle. In May 1979, she was one of the Vieques 21 arrested for protesting U.S. Navy occupation of Vieques, Puerto Rico."

A new generation of freedom fighters includes Nydia Cuevas, a political prisoner who took over the Chilean consulate in San Juan with Pablo Marciano in 1978. They demanded Puerto Rico's independence and an end to fascism in Chile. In addition, five of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War are women.

When Nydia Cuevas and Pablo Marciano took over the Chilean consulate on July 4, 1978, they exposed the hypocrisy of Independence Day celebrations in a U.S. colony and of Jimmy Carter's "human rights" policy in Latin America. In a joint communique issued that summer, Nydia and Pablo defined themselves as part of a struggle that spans generations of Puerto Ricans whose commitment to independence remains unbroken. "We have acted in light of the consensus of great liberators, and in the spirit, firmness and tradition of Don Pedro Albizu Campos and our legendary heroes who still remain in U.S. prisons after 24 years (the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists). Our ideology is indestructible. Carter's government can imprison us by force. It doesn't matter. Future generations of struggling Puerto Ricans will liberate us sooner than expected when we realize our Independent Nation and full sovereignty to construct a society free from exploitation of man by man."

The 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War include 10 Puerto Rican patriots captured in April, 1980 and Oscar López, who was arrested in May 1981. The 11 are accused



Nydia Cuevas, at Federal Correctional Institution, Pleasanton, California.

of belonging to the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (F.A.L.N.), a clandestine independence organization responsible for over 100 armed actions inside the U.S. Charged with seditious conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government through force of arms, all 11 refused to participate in their trials. Instead, they declared themselves Prisoners of War, captured combatants in the emerging People's War for Puerto Rican Independence. All the 11 denied that the colonizer's courts have any jurisdiction to judge or pass sentence on their actions. They are now serving prison sentences ranging from 20 years to life, but they continue to exert a powerful influence on the Puerto Rican movement to deny the legitimacy of the U.S. government and to understand the necessity of armed struggle in freeing Puerto Rico from U.S. colonialism. The entire last section of this booklet is devoted to their writings, because their uncompromising stance against imperialism is a leading example of revolutionary politics and character.

A common mistake is to view revolutionary women as fanatical extremists or superhuman towers of strength that we can never equal, but both these conceptions are far from the truth. Many of us turned Lolita into a myth — after all, what kind of woman would shoot into Congress, endure 25 years in prison and call herself the luckiest woman in the world? When we met Lolita soon after her release in 1980, we found out. She is a warm, articulate, impassioned woman, a patriot who wants to see her country free, and a visionary who wants to see a world where children no longer grow up in squalor. Her unquenchable spirit comes from the love she so obviously feels for the people of Puerto Rico and the world. Lolita Lebron's do not fall from the sky. Her strength and spirit, like our own, is the product of ongoing struggle and commitment.

We hope these poems show that the political ideas and commitments of their authors flow from their lives and experiences as Puerto Rican women. As Prisoner of War Dylcia Pagán Morales wrote, "One of the reasons poetry has become a common form of revolutionary expression is that poetry in itself represents a medium of expressing the essence of love. All revolutionaries operate from a base of love for their struggle, which enables one to see the realities of our oppressive plight to the extent that this love converts itself into revolutionary commitment to principles and ideas. The revolutionary poetic expression in turn becomes a reflection of the soul of the writer."

FROM POETRY TO ACTION

This poetry should help us to move beyond reflection to solidarity with the Puerto Rican independence movement. This solidarity doesn't mean putting Puerto Rico somewhere on the back burner, it means a concrete stand and concrete actions. As the Prisoners of War continue their fight from prisons scattered across the country, People's War continues building on the outside, and the state mobilizes in an attempt to crush it. Now a grand jury witchhunt aimed at the Puerto Rican and Chicano Mexicano activists has subpoenaed one woman and four men. The prison terms for non-collaboration hanging over the heads of these Puerto Rican and Chicano Mexicano activists is an attack and attempt to intimidate the Puerto Rican

people and those who support their fight for independence. The need for solidarity is urgent and ongoing. What you do — demonstrating, educating others, giving material aid, participating in emergency letter writing campaigns — does make a difference. The struggle for women's liberation isn't separate or unrelated to the struggles of colonized nations for national liberation. How do we define our enemies? How do we build an anti-imperialist women's movement capable of fighting for women's liberation while fighting to defeat U.S. imperialism? Colonized people have pointed to U.S. imperialism as the world's most dangerous enemy and national liberation victories in Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua have shown the strategy that can defeat it — People's War. Of course imperialism's defeat doesn't guarantee the end of male supremacy, but from the experience of women and men fighting side by side against a common enemy and working together to build a new society, comes a new basis for the long struggle for women's liberation. The victories of colonized nations like Puerto Rico are bringing America's worldwide reign of terror to a close and hastening the process of creating a new world where male supremacy and colonialism cease to exist. We too can be fighters in that struggle.

—Women of the New Movement in Solidarity with the Puerto Rican and Mexican Revolutions



Anti-imperialist women's demonstration in solidarity with freedom fighters, International Women's Day, San Francisco, 1982.

LOLA RODRIGUEZ DE TIO

Lola Rodríguez de Tio, known as the “daughter of the islands,” dedicated her actions and poetry to the struggle to free Puerto Rico from Spain. She participated fully in the continental struggle against Spanish colonialism that was sweeping Latin America and Central America. While living in political exile in New York, she worked with José Martí in planning the 1895 Cuban revolution.

In the 1860's, she wrote the words to the Puerto Rican national anthem, La Borinqueña, commenting, “I wanted them to make people leave their homes and take up arms.” Her poetry reflects her beliefs that freedom will only be won through armed struggle and that women were making valuable contributions in revolutionary movements and culture.

La Borinqueña has become a banner for the Puerto Rican people in their struggle for independence. The profound ties between generations of independentistas form what Doña Consuelo called the “unbreakable human thread.” Over one hundred years after Lola Rodríguez de Tio wrote this anthem, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Haydée Torres defiantly turned her back on the judge who could sentence her to death, and led her supporters in the courtroom in singing La Borinquena.



Lola Rodríguez de Tio, 1843-1924.

The Song of Borinquen

*Awake, Borinqueños,
for they have given the signal!*

*Awake from your sleep
for it's time to fight!*

*Come! The sound of the cannon
will be dear to us.*

*At that patriotic clamour
doesn't your heart burn?*

*Look! The Cuban will soon be free,
the machete will give him freedom.*

*The drum of war announces in its beating
that the thicket is the place, the meeting place!*

*Most beautiful Borinquen, we have to follow Cuba;
you have brave sons who want to fight!*

*Let us no more seem fearful!
Let us no more, timid, permit our enslavement!*

*We want to be free already
and our machete is well sharpened!*

continued on the next page

"Song of Borinquen" continued

*Why should we, then, remain so asleep
and deaf, asleep and deaf to that signal?*

*There's no need to fear, Puerto Ricans, the sound of the cannon,
for saving the homeland is the duty of the heart!*

*We want no more despots! Let the tyrants fall!
Women, likewise wild, will know how to fight!*

We want freedom and our machete will give it to us!

*Let's go, Puerto Ricans, let's go already,
for liberty is waiting, ever so anxious!*

La Borinqueña

*Awake Borinqueños, you have been called to rise;
Arise from your slumber; the time to struggle is now.
Does not your heart burn at the call of the homeland?
Come, the sound of the cannon will be music to your ears.
We long for freedom.
With our machetes we shall gain it.
Onward Borinqueños, Onward!
Freedom awaits impatiently.
Liberty! Liberty!*

-Lola Rodríguez de Tio

JULIA DE BURGOS

Julia de Burgos is recognized as one of Puerto Rico's greatest poets. Born in 1914 to a poor family, she made great sacrifices to obtain an education. She traveled to New York in search of work, as did thousands of other Puerto Ricans, forced to migrate due to impossible living conditions on the island. She was an active participant in the labor struggle and independence movement. Unable to find work and oppressed by the same severe exploitation and racism that faced people on the island, she began to drink. The alienation and loss of cultural identity that affected her so deeply are part of the colonial conditions that continue today. Julia de Burgos' early death at the age of 37 was an irreplaceable loss to the Puerto Rican people.



Dona Consuelo Lee Tapia (de Corretjer) (left) and Julia de Burgos (right) in New York.

To Julia de Burgos

*The word is out that I am your enemy
That in my poetry I am giving you away.
They lie, Julia de Burgos. They lie, Julia de Burgos.
That voice that rises in my poems is not yours: it is my voice;*

*You are the covering and I the essence;
and between us lies the deepest chasm.*

*You are the frigid doll of social falsehood
and I, the virile spark of human truth.*

*You are the honey of courtly hypocrisy, not I;
I bare my heart in all my poems.*

*You are selfish, like your world, not I;
I gamble everything to be what I am.*

*You are but the grave lady, lady-like;
not I; I am life and strength and I am a woman.*

*You belong to your husband, your master, not I;
I belong to no one or to everyone, because to all,
to all I give myself in pure feelings and in my thought.*

*You curl your hair, and paint your face, not I.
I am curled by the wind, painted by the sun.
You are the lady of the house, resigned and meek,
tied to the prejudices of man, not I;
smelling the horizons of the justice of God.
I am Rocinante, running headlong.*

*You don't even rule yourself; everybody rules you;
your husband rules you, your parents, your relatives,
the priest, the designer, the theatre, the casino,
the car, jewels, banquets, champagne,
heaven and hell, and "what will people say?"*

*Not me, because only my heart rules me,
only my thoughts; the one who rules in me is me.*

You, flower of the aristocracy, and I, the flower of the people.

*You have everything in yourself and you owe it to everybody,
whereas I, my nothing I owe to nobody.*

*You nail to the static ancestral dividend,
and I, a one in the numbers of the social divider
we are a duel to the death, which nears fatally.*

*When the multitudes run joyously
leaving behind ashes of burning injustices
and when, with the torch of the seven virtues
the multitudes run after the seven sins,
against you and against all that is unjust and inhuman,
I will go in the middle of them with my torch in my hand.*



"The Two Fridas" by Frida Kahlo, Mexican artist.

DOÑA CONSUELO LEE CORRETJER

Doña Consuelo Lee Tapia Corretjer is a leading Puerto Rican revolutionary and poet. She has been actively involved in creating revolutionary culture and politics for over 50 years. Inspired and politically challenged by the arrests and imprisonment of the leadership of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico in the 30's, she dedicated herself to the independence movement. The Spanish Civil War against fascism also had a great impact on her political development.

It was as a representative of the Communist Party that she met Don Juan Antonio Corretjer who was a leading member of the Nationalist Party. They were later married and have continued together their fight for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Her life has been an array of revolutionary development — combining political struggle with art and culture. She has been active in both the U.S. and on the island in developing peoples' journals of revolutionary politics and culture. She was the editor of a political-cultural journal called *Pueblos Hispanos* in the U.S., and founded Escuela Betances in Puerto Rico.

In 1962, Dona Consuelo and her husband participated in the founding of La Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña, a public revolutionary organization which continues today to be the major organization on the island that actively supports the development of People's War as the only way Puerto Rico will gain its independence. In 1969, they were both sent to prison, along with other members of the L.S.P. Central Committee, on charges of Seditious Conspiracy — the same charges that the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War face today. She recalls a vow she made while in prison: "Either they will carry me out dead or I will leave as a free woman; and I left free."

Following are excerpts from a talk she gave on "Poetry and the Puerto Rican Woman" which appeared in the 1981 International Women's Day issue of *Que Ondee Sola*, a Puerto Rican student publication from Chicago.

Dona Consuelo Lee Corretjer, leader of the Puerto Rican Socialist League, carrying a picket sign which reads "Long live the Revolutionary Clandestine Forces".



POETRY AND THE PUERTO RICAN WOMEN

*Excerpts from Talk by Dona Consuelo Lee Tapia de Corretjer
August 1980, Puerto Rico.*

Speaking to you is Consuelo Lee Tapia and for the best part of my life I tagged on Corretjer because a Puerto Rican woman never loses her identity after marriage. She always keeps her name and her children use both names, the father's and the mother's names. The Corretjer Lee family in my case. I am seventy-six years old and part of a family who have been living in Puerto Rico since before the year 1616. I am very much interested in what is politely called 'the woman question.' To my surprise I became aware of woman's real position in this society, of dog eat dog, of her inequality, and of injustices she submitted to precisely among the enlightened. The heroic effort of our leftist men to force their brains to forget their chauvanistic training is very commendable. Only a united struggle will ever resolve this.

This may seem a queer way of explaining how I came to write poetry. I think it was a natural consequence of living. I think life, if looked upon from the right angle is poetry, even if it takes the form of a Greek tragedy. Poetry is an accumulation of strong emotions produced by contacts with nature and its beauty in all forms, including the human form, expressed in chosen words. Poetry is an integral part of Puerto Rican culture. When a child opens his eyes for the first time in Puerto Rico it is in the midst of beauty, even in a slum. The sun, the moon, the sky, the softness of the breeze penetrate his being freely. Sometimes poetry within a child becomes a refuge against the inhumanity of allowing such a magnificent creation of a child to be born in a slum. The contrast is tremendous. Nature's exuberance dominates all things. So if given the opportunity he will try to express it. It is latent. It has been useful for the morale of our prisoners. This is why a Puerto Rican away from Puerto Rico always keeps in close touch with his country and hopes to come back. This thread that ties him to his native land is sometimes the only thing that makes him endure the suffering and discrimination he receives in the ghetto. He knows within himself that life is something way beyond the ghetto, for he carries this knowledge within him.

Poetry is as necessary to us as is music. Our culture combines them in the *décima* set to different rhythms. A *décima* is a stanza of ten lines. When a singer sings them he has to improvise. Very often the public gives him the theme, or the last line with which he or she is supposed to end each stanza. Or the singer is given four lines, each one in the order given has to end each stanza of a set of four stanzas. The rhyme is very strict and it is difficult because you have to do it on your feet as you go along. The only time you have to think awhile is while the music plays before you start. They also hold controversies between two men or a woman and a man. The women's liberation theme is often in the controversy. I have heard a man singer sustain women's rights. The woman is giving her ideas and he is answering her in full agreement. By the fourth stanza she was thanking him. The *décima* is a genuine form of people's expression, charming and a way to discuss amicably ideas on all

questions, from love and admiration to politics and war. I found a woman singer of *décimas* in jail and when I gave her a book "*Yerba Bruja*" which has many within its pages, she immediately began to improvise. *Décimas* are sung to a great variety of rhythms. The "*cuatro*" is a Puerto Rican instrument indispensable for accompanying decimas. The "*güiro*" or "*güicharo*" player is also part of a musical group as is the guitar player.

So I say again, you ask how did I come to write poetry and how do I see poetry as being an expression of my role in the movement? If it is poetry I write, I pick it up out of the air I breathe, and the songs I hear. In my brain these sounds, my native land, in one way or another, are transformed poetically and eventually comes in words which I consider thoughts and so consider poetry. I think this is a useful thing to the movement to which I'm dedicated, because these patriotic feelings, love of country, search for justice for those who love our earth and the people who are on it, can only give back to the people what they have been robbed of and help organize them politically, which can only be worthwhile if it turns the 'I' into the 'We'.

Recently the imperialists murdered a very fine example of a virtuous man, who fought for our independence and socialism. He was murdered for his participation in the Vieques protest a year ago. The U.S. navy has decided to use Vieques for its war practice with live bullets no matter what happens to that Puerto Rican island or its inhabitants. His name, Angel Rodríguez Cristobal, 33 years old, loving husband and father of two children. My way of expressing the enormous sorrow we felt had to come out in a poem to him a couple of months later. His sacrifice I set right into our history along with that of other patriots. I will include a sort of translation with explanation and a vocabulary because it is an example of what makes one write poetry.

For the sake of clarity I will explain the vocabulary first so you may better enjoy the historical poem. Lares and Jayuya are places where Puerto Ricans took arms to fight for freedom, Lares in 1868, Jayuya in 1950. Francisco "Pachin" Marin — Puerto Rican patriot and poet, went to Cuba where he died in 1897 in the Cuban war of independence. His men had to abandon him wounded and it is said that when the men returned to fetch him the birds had carried away his heart. Mariana is Mariana Bracetti who embroidered the flag of Lares for the revolution, a militant fighter for independence. She was imprisoned despite the fact that she was expecting a child who was, for this reason, born in her prison cell. Lolita Lebrón — a fighter for independence, imprisoned 25 years for leading the attack on Congress in 1954, very religious. Oscar Collazo was condemned to death for the attempt against Truman at Blair House in 1950. He was placed in death row with a telephone at his elbow for him to call the warden if he repented — which he did not. He was told if he did it would help to commute his sentence to life in prison. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment when a strong protest from the Puerto Ricans condemned capital punishment. Juan Antonio Corretjer — poet and patriot, went to Atlanta with Albizu Campos and six other Nationalists. He was severely punished in the hole on bread and water for long terms several times. He was imprisoned from 1936 on, and in 1937 to 1942 served the rest of his sentence with Albizu in Atlanta. Pedro Albizu Campos — Patriot and martyr, maximal leader of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico. He seemed to have his legs burned into awful

sores during this incarceration of 1950 to 1953. William Guillermo Morales was imprisoned after a bomb exploded in his hand. One hand shriveled and the other one had one finger left. Despite this, he escaped while at the prisoners' ward at the third floor of Bellvue hospital, New York, by jumping out of the window. He is still at large.

Bolivar Marques was killed in the Ponce massacre of 1937. While wounded he dipped his finger in his own blood and wrote upon a wall next to where he lay bleeding to death the following words, "Viva Puerto Rico Libre, Abajo los Asesinos," "Long Live Free Puerto Rico, Down with the Assassins." Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, murdered by the United States imperialists under Carter in the federal penitentiary of Tallahassee, Florida, condemned to six months for trespassing on his own land in Vieques, national martyr and hero, November 11, 1979.

We always take a star of red carnations to our patriots' tombs. The poem is entitled "A Red Star for Angel", and is dedicated to my comrades of the Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña.



Funeral of Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, murdered in prison by the U.S. state on November 11, 1979. 8000 people attended his funeral in Ciales, Puerto Rico.

A Red Star for Angel

*Had I but a small clod of earth from the
paths tread by the evils of Lares and Jayuya,
Or a wisp of the martyred breaths
of Pachín abandoned,*

*Or the crystal of a single teardrop squeezed
from Mariana in her maternal ordeals in captivity,*

*Or a bead from Lolita's rosary
polished by her prayers for the homeland,
Or the ray of sunlight that announced another
day to Oscar in his cell on death row,*

*Or a hunger spasm from the
solitary confinement of Juan Antonio,*

*Or the pain turning to sores
on Don Pedro's extremities,*

*Or the martyred flesh and holocaust
of William Guillermo,*

*Or a single drop of blood
from Bolívar Marques' accusing finger,
Or the anonymous wails of a defiant heart
that travel on the airwaves we breathe,
I would make Angel, joining them together
an enormous, triumphant red star.*

*Red as the burning blood of your
open and tortured brow.*

A red Puerto Rican Star.

Independentist. Socialist.

*Made to conform with your
valiant, decisive words.*

-Doña Consuelo Lee Corretjer

You ask me to speak of Julia de Burgos. The most outstanding Puerto Rican woman poet in my opinion is Julia de Burgos, a Puerto Rican born in Carolina. She is outstanding because she not only wrote excellent lyrical poetry but was an active fighter for independence and later, for socialism. Her poetry is beautiful and forceful. We worked together in the early forties in New York City. She was always a pleasant, gentle, kind and soft spoken young woman. To me she was very attractive with her mahogany colored hair and her rosy beige skin. I thought her very talented and patriotic. Our friendship was bound by our ideas on literature and especially on politics, the idea we shared. She once asked me to write poetry, which I did off and on, but I told her I had much reading to do and did not have her talent to be able to pour it off like she did. In fact, I had to be laid low by my heart in order to put together in my seventies the small book *Con Un Hombro Menos* (*With One Shoulder Less*). This poem, which gives the title to the book, is also political, for its title means that when I die there will be one shoulder less to push the cart of freedom and socialism but others will go on. There are many excellent women writers in Puerto Rico. I mention Julia because you ask about her and she was consistently a fighter for independence and socialism, and a fine poet.

You ask what is the role of literature within the movement? I think it is indispensable because the written word is not carried away by the wind. Though some have questioned the literary merits of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, one cannot deny the compelling force of its message against slavery in the days when Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote it. You all know what an Uncle Tom is but despite this there was a woman who felt she could reach many people by means of the written word. In our form of culture all literary expressions are of untold service for any cause. Certainly Puerto Rican women need written expression to combat colonialism which aggravates the usual discrimination women suffer in any capitalist society. We need to set our thoughts straight as well as other people's thoughts. Of course I refer to responsible and honest thoughts.

As to your question on the role of the White woman in our struggle in Puerto Rico, I have this to say: In Puerto Rico the White woman's role in the fundamental issue of our nation, the struggle for national survival and the fight for independence and socialism is the same as that of our Black sisters. That is to give everything: work, dedication, life, husband, daughter and sons to the great revolutionary upheaval with which we contribute to the history of socialism on a world scale. With this we abolish all the evils imperialism has brought upon us and we women, like all men, have nothing to lose but our dreams.

I am including the poem that gives the title to my book *Con Un Hombro Menos*, which someone suggested I do and to which I have referred to in this talk before. But before I do this let me give you some ideas of the subjects treated in my book so you can judge what moves me, poetically speaking and if you think it is useful to our cause of freedom or not. I write about the cynics that have taken possession of the decaying capitalist society and what they're doing to our home, the earth, and ask the people to hang on to their principles which will, in the end, frustrate their evil purposes. I write about free enterprise and its affect on all of us, where all things are bought or sold, including our emotions and sentiments. I wrote two

poems on Viet Nam, *Viet Nam at War* and *Viet Nam at Peace*. At war, Viet Nam's determination and faith in the truth of their cause led them to victory over and over again, against all odds, no matter the might of the enemy. In Viet Nam at peace the same spirit leads them in the reconstruction. For us and all humanity, a lesson. It is the same enemy we fight against and the same enemy the whole world will have to fight, I write of death and how I was helped to conquer fear since youth cannot and should not abolish us. Turn your fear into anger and courage to fight 'til victory. I tell death she will have to wait until I am through living, she cannot claim me before. And I write about children and trees because I love them and their future is at stake and we must fight for them. Many more subjects which cross my living mind and probably are the thoughts that other people share with me. My poem follows.



Andrea Lopez, mother of POW Oscar Lopez-Rivera (left), and Dona Consuelo Lee Corretjer (center), supporter of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War.

With One Shoulder Less

*There will be no minute of silence when I die,
Nor shall a cloud shut off the sun.
Nor will the moon cease to embellish the earth
Nor a sorrowful tear, when I die.*

*No. There can be no silence
Nor can the sun be darkened.
Nor the earth be left without the splendor of the silvery moon.
Nor tears of sorrow.*

*Because, the day I was born
there was a great joy
in my home and my neighbors',
so my elders assured me.*

*Even my name was chosen
to bury a grief.
The sun filtering through the slatted window
dazzled my new born eyes with joy.
And that night the moon smiled her inane and empty smile,
And all tears dried in the saddest eyes.*

*So that when I die
life will continue its tremendous din
of coquis, of joyous children
which is life itself
Wherever they lay me down, the coquis
will sing happily upon my tomb.
Now in the burial ground
the solitary dead will feel less lonely.*

continued on the next page

"With One Shoulder Less" continued

*The sun will shine now more intensely
so a tree over my tomb can grow.
And that night the moon will come to greet me
as she has so often done before in my already
long and arduous journey.
I will remember that she has never left my side,
not even when I was in prison.
Tears will dry upon the eyes of those who suffer
because they cannot be shed until they are tears of
joy for the happiness of all,
that now in my absence they will have to
carry on the load
With one shoulder less.*

To a Vietnamese Facing Death, Whom I Love But Whom I Never Met

*I listen to the anonymous cries
That come from the centuries
and the far away cries
Of those that come ahead
Of those that lovingly pick up
the duties that are left by the fallen,
of those of us who know that happiness
is to understand their obligation, to have the faith
that in this beautiful world
nothing is lost, not even a moan,
not even a pain, not even a joy,
not even a horror; nothing that is faithful to the truth.
But their only responsibility is to carry on
anonymously that which is
everyone's, not one person's only.
They are those who pick up
loving the responsibilities,
that can carry them as far as it's possible
to carry them by way of what we were and what we
will be, like an unbreakable human thread.*

--Dona Consuelo Lee Corretjer



Internal Rivers

*Some time ago, I learned to cry without tears
as thousands do, who suffer;
they fall on the inside, the tears.
Inexhaustible torrents.
They don't fill barrels, but bandoliers.
Many bandoliers, filled with tears,
tears as hard as bullets.
Cartridge belts that suffering fills
with bullets that are teardrops.
Every bullet with the name of someone who caused suffering.
Thousands of bullets! --and if one misses its target,
there are thousands that will reach it.
Many are the centuries of suffering.
In the time of the long-suffering,
every century is an enormous teardrop.
There are cartridge belts with the cries of children
In Vietnam alone they could have filled them
all with the tears of all the children.
There are bandoliers with women's tears.
A girl, a torch in Vietnam
A mother, with her fertile belly ripped up.
Thousands of cartridges -
through the centuries they have been filling up.
Thousands of virile teardrops
to fill rifles by the thousands;
Thousands, because those that don't reach their target
suffice to overflow, to form a weeping sea
burning with molten lead, to smother and drown
the tyrants.
When one may have
a rifle without shooting it, and teardrops
have ceased to be gunshots,
and the land will have been cleansed of suffering;
the living will welcome the dead anew,
and there will flower anew, in the resurgence,
the human purpose deflected through the crying times.*

*--Dona Consuelo de Corretjer
1975*

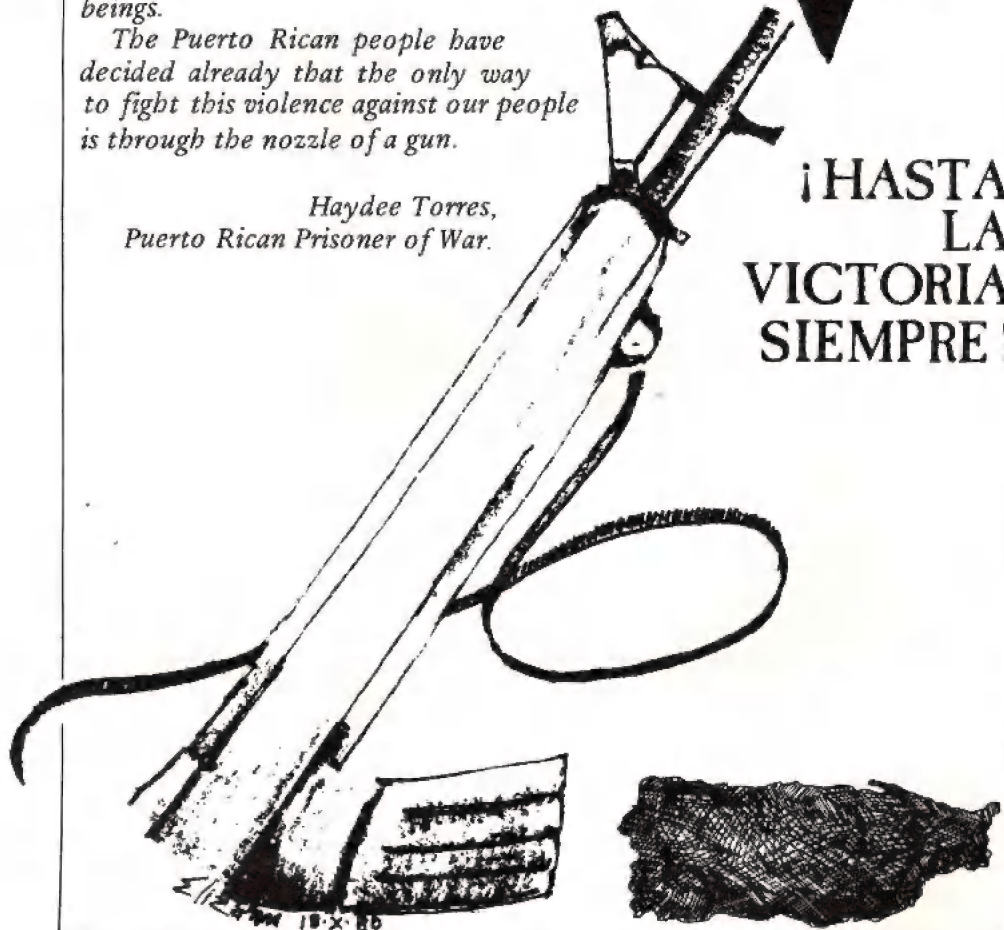
We, the Puerto Rican people, see that laws do exist which clearly say that we Puerto Ricans have the duty and the right to be free. But these laws are not kept. They are daily violated by this country.

Therefore, we the Puerto Rican people, have to make a choice: Either we fight against the violence perpetuated against our people, through armed struggle; or we sit back and accept that the U.S. should continue to violate our rights as human beings.

The Puerto Rican people have decided already that the only way to fight this violence against our people is through the nozzle of a gun.

*Haydee Torres,
Puerto Rican Prisoner of War.*

**¡HASTA
LA
VICTORIA
SIEMPRE !**



Drawing by Elizam Escobar, one of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War.

LOLITA LEBRON

On March 4, 1954, Lolita Lebrón led Irvin Flores, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Andrés Figueroa Cordero in an attack on Congress. They fired shots into the House of Representatives, unfurled a Puerto Rican flag, and proclaimed "¡Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre!" This action was in response to intensifying colonial attacks on the independence movement, especially the imposition of Commonwealth status. In the midst of a U.S. campaign to prove to the world that Puerto Rico was no longer a U.S. colony, the Nationalists' actions shouted out that there was an active and militant independence movement on the island and in the U.S.

Lolita was born in the town of Lares, where the first proclamation of Puerto Rican nationhood was made in 1868. In a statement from prison Lolita explains some of her earliest understanding of the destructive impact of U.S. colonialism:

"As a little girl, I went to school and learned to place my hand over my heart and pledge allegiance to the U.S. My classmates were very pale and sickly looking children, mostly all barefoot and in rags with swollen stomachs, skinny bodies and were nervous and uneasy. One day I heard myself saying, if I could make a better world, I would make it - a world where hard-working oppressed people would be free."

"At 21 and amidst a very difficult life of suffering, I was advised to do as other poor women of my country were doing - to sail to New York where there would be more opportunities. My life in New York grew to a greater understanding of human oppression, exploitation and negation. I had to deny I was Puerto Rican in order to get a job."

Lolita was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole for the action against the U.S. Congress. She served 25 years in prison, many of them spent in solitary confinement and with severe physical and psychological harassment and torture. Her commitment to the struggle to free her nation helped to keep her strong and militant during her years in prison. She actively supported progressive struggles inside prison and participated in a hunger strike in support of the Attica rebellion.

Lolita, along with the other three living Nationalist prisoners, was unconditionally released in 1979 by Jimmy Carter. This was a result of the growing Puerto Rican independence movement and Puerto Rican solidarity movement, as well as the military and political actions by the clandestine organizations which consistently demanded their freedom. In the U.S., communiques accompanying F.A.L.N. armed actions always made release of the Nationalists a primary demand.

As a leader of the Nationalist Party, Lolita continues to fight for independence. She participated in the campaign on the island of Vieques against U.S. Navy occupation and toured the U.S. in 1980 in support of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War.



Capture of Lolita Lebron and Rafael Cancel Miranda, two of four Nationalists who attacked the U.S. Congress in 1954, to demand independence for Puerto Rico.

Oye -- Listen

Listen.

*I am eating a sweet.
It tastes like medicine,
it contains a chemical from Alderson.*

*We have to cure, cure,
cure the wound
they have given to mama.
The wound
the yankees gave to our Beautiful Land.
Goodness, don't laugh
at my language.*

*Have you heard the thicket speak?
I know that the leaves of the malanga
are used as cups.*

*Listen,
I am made of mud.
I write with mud on
these rosebuds flowering
in delicious nutrients.
It has roots of bone,
flesh and soul
it has the sun
and its whole being
is crowned
by a great spiral snail shell.*

--Lolita Lebron



We must, comrades, we must take up arms, if it is necessary, in order to bring this evil empire to its knees and to destroy it. Companeros, when we attacked the Capitol and Congress of the United States of North America, we had the inalienable right to do this and we felt proud to have taken up arms. We, the people of the world, can't submit ourselves to injustice, indignity and murder. We must rise up against these things, and if we die in the act, then we at least die standing.

Lolita Lebron, speaking in defense of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, May, 1980.

THE 11 PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

On April 4, 1980, ten Puerto Rican patriots, Alicia Rodriguez, Ida Luz Rodriguez, Dylcia Pagán Morales, Carmen Valentin, Carlos Alberto Torres, Luis Rosa, Elizam Escobar, Adolfo Matos, Ricardo Jiménez and Haydée Torres, were captured by the U.S. In May, 1981, Oscar López Rivera was also arrested. All have declared themselves Prisoners of War, combatants in the war for Puerto Rican independence and socialism. They deny any jurisdiction by the U.S. over them. They have all been sentenced to long prison terms on charges of seditious conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government by force.

The world is well aware that among the many national liberation struggles flaring up in the world, today, both inside and outside of the U.S.A., the revolutionary Puerto Rican independence movement has special importance. The Puerto Rican struggle for freedom from direct colonial control by the U.S. exposes the true nature of the worldwide system of imperialism. It is this awareness that makes this enemy react with all its beastly force. It is this realization, this threat of one more defeat that brings them to use their last tool—seditious conspiracy charges. This only serves to prove to the international arena the actual state of war that exists between the Puerto Rican nation and the U.S.A. For what does seditious conspiracy mean? Seditious conspiracy means war. Seditious conspiracy means that a group of Puerto Rican soldiers utilized weapons, bombs, and all other military hardware at their disposal to rid themselves of the tentacles of the destructive imperialist monster. We reaffirm here the right of all oppressed nations that are concerned with building a world free from oppression and exploitation—to engage in the same political-military acts. Destroying imperialism and building a new world can only be accomplished through armed insurrection.

—Statement by the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, Spring, 1981.





Once captured we were taken to a police precinct in Evanston. The women were held in one area and the men in another. This did not keep us from communicating with each other. We could hear the chanting of our comrades outside; it served as an inspiration. At no time did we let up our chanting and defiance. Utilizing the number given to us, we called out our numbers and kept abreast of the conditions on both tiers. This song above was written by us, the companeras for our six companeros who could hear us but not see us. While being transported to the Cook County Correctional Institution, we were able to collectively sing and embrace each other with revolutionary love and respect.

Written by the Puerto Rican women POW's after their capture, April, 1980.

HAYDEE TORRES

The clarity and fearless opposition of Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Haydée Torres exemplifies the millions of women freedom fighters around the world who are exploding the bourgeois myth of passive, docile womanhood. She was an activist in the Puerto Rican community in New York. Pregnant at the time she was forced to go underground, she had her child under difficult conditions. Her strength, determination and clarity about her commitment is an inspiring example to all of us because she shows no fear of the U.S. empire. She has faced F.B.I. beatings and harassment, several moves from prison to prison, and the conscious medical neglect of a painful condition prison doctors falsely diagnosed as pre-cancerous. She is presently being held in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in San Diego.

Haydée was tried in the same courtroom where Lolita Lebrón had been tried 24 years before. Facing federal charges stemming from the F.A.L.N. bombing of Mobil Oil headquarters, Haydée was convicted by an all white jury and sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole. Lolita Lebrón, who attended Haydée's trial, described how Haydée turned her back on the judge and spoke to her courtroom supporters,

"She addressed the people as I have seen no one address the people! She gave an analysis of who she is, what she does, and what she was there for and what she is planning to do as a guerrilla. And the judge tried to talk, and I knew that he tried, because once in awhile my eyes would turn to him to see what he was doing and he was talking to empty walls. It was like he was not there, because she incapacitated the whole court. She gave a speech like I have never heard in my life —and I have heard many speeches! I want you to know that you should be proud of her because the whole world is going to be proud of Haydée. She will not accept jurisdiction from the American system. She knows what she is — she is a freedom fighter, and does not belong in jail!"

In her courtroom statement, Haydée declared,

"I, Haydée Torres, am a Puerto Rican prisoner of war. I am a product of this continuous struggle waged by my people. I am the conscience of my people in arms. And like a captured prisoner of war, neither this court, nor this country has any right to treat me like a criminal and subject me to those things for which they have brought me here. They say they want a sample of my hair, a sample of my writing, and to subject myself to a line-up. Neither my hair nor my soul shall they have. I am free, and neither these bars nor this miserable and shameful country can keep me imprisoned."



Haydee Torres, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War. Photo taken in Federal Correctional Institute, Pleasanton, California, summer, 1981.

A free and struggling spirit cannot be broken. The enemy is amazed to see my calmness, my strength, my rage, and my conviction in what I believe and live. I am proud to know that my people continue the struggle. This country (U.S.) does not know how to combat the revolutionary spirit of a people in arms.

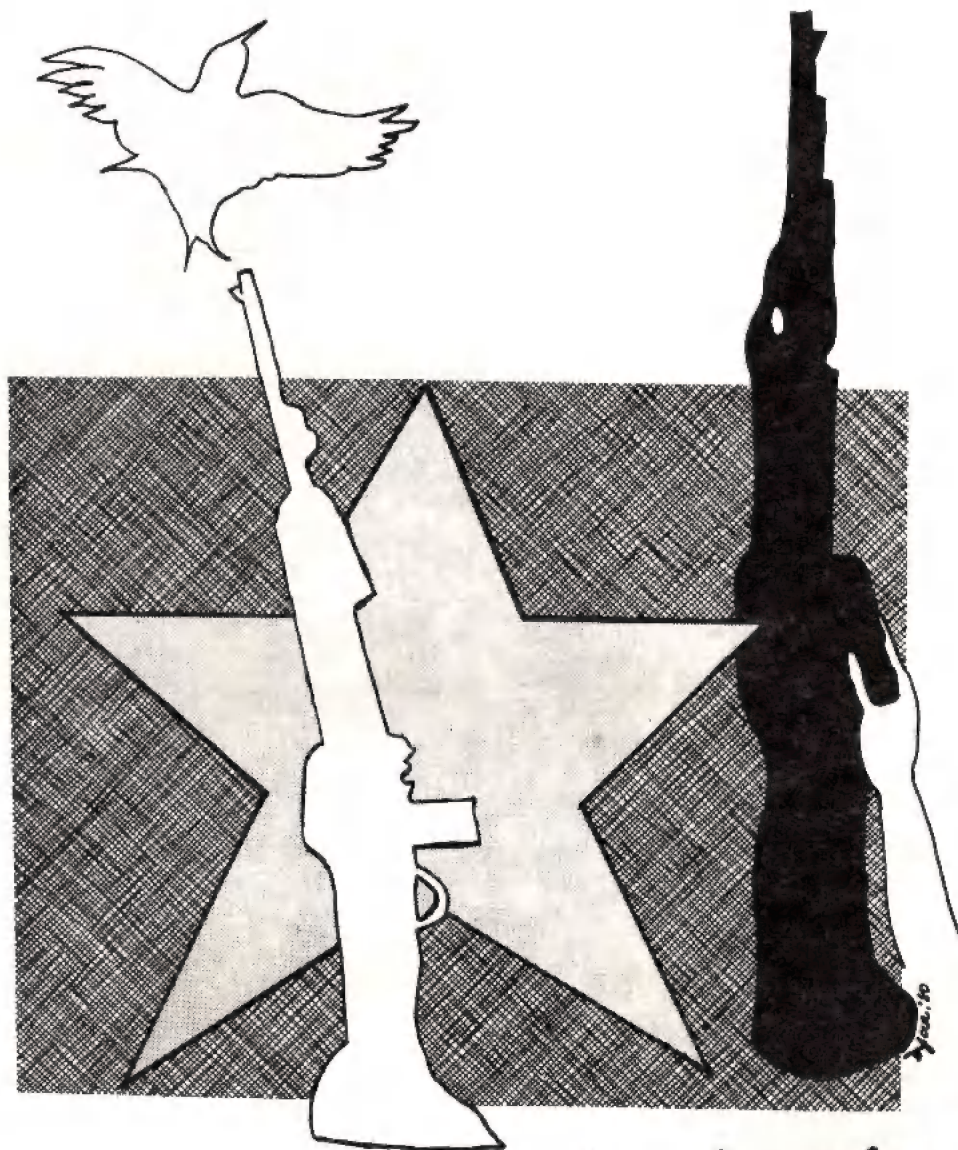
Haydee Torres

DYLCIA PAGAN MORALES

Dylcia Pagán Morales was born on October 15, 1946. She resided and was raised in "El Barrio - East Harlem" in New York City. From early age, Dylcia was involved in community projects. Her activism in education, housing, health and social services made her a well-known member of the Puerto Rican community of N.Y.C. After completing high school and several years of working directly in the community, Dylcia attended Brooklyn College, where she majored in Political Science and Psychology. While in college, she engaged diligently in the creation of a Puerto Rican Studies Department, and also was one of the founders of the Puerto Rican Student Union. She participated on the Young Lords Peoples Church takeover and worked closely with them and the Student Union in establishing Free Puerto Rico Committees throughout the five boroughs of N.Y.C. During this time Dylcia taught social studies for the Board of Education at the elementary level in East Harlem. For the past nine years Dylcia has worked as a TV producer/writer at NBC, ABC, and most recently CBS TV's "Channel 2: The People." In her professional career she has created programming for adults as well as educational programs for children, primarily focusing on investigative reporting on Third World issues. Because of her political stand supporting Puerto Rican independence, she was forced to leave the now defunct bilingual newspaper "El Tiempo," where she was editor of the English section. Several of her writings have been published in various publications and journals. After the capture of her husband, William Guillermo Morales, while she was pregnant, she was subpoenaed before a Federal Grand Jury and refused to testify.

In a statement made by Dylcia Pagán Morales and Carmen Valentín on International Women's Day, 1982, they declared,

"Many who have visited with us have inquired as to the circumstances that led to our decision in becoming combatants in our war of national liberation. To best answer one can say that as individuals specific experiences in our lives aided us in making a decision, but the essence of all of us is a strong sense of love of our fellow man, a strong sense of justice and a continual commitment to our principles. It is true that most of us have children just beginning to talk and at crucial ages. We have husbands and wives from whom we must be separated as part of the sacrifice for creating a new life for our people. We, as combatants on the war for national liberation, chose to commit ourselves to struggle no matter what the consequences. It is our sincere love for humanity that makes it all worthwhile."



*"La Independencia, se logra
con violencia!"*

"In order to gain independence, violence is necessary". Drawn in prison by Dylcia Pagan Morales, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War.

*Dylcia Pagan Morales,
Puerto Rican Prisoner of War,
speaking at a demonstration on
July 4, 1979, outside the gates
of the Federal Correctional
Institute, Pleasanton, California,
where Nydia Cuevas was then
being held.*



Have you Seen "La Nueva Mujer Revolucionaria Puertorriqueña?"

*She walks with the stride of her borinquen ancestry as a "Taina Casica"
She bears the child which will reap the benefits of our new society,
She knows where she is headed, for her commitment is to her people.
She speaks with dignity and defiance, for she knows that her principles
are correct and reflect the oppression of her homeland and her people.
She stands with fervor with arm in hand beside her companeros.
For she is prepared to meet whatever consequences arrives.
The signal is given!
She reponds fearlessly for she is certain that victory will prevail.
She is captured by the enemy
But she does not despair, for she knows that her actions have
been heard and her people will respond.
The struggle continues until death.*

--Dylcia Pagan Morales

*For the Children of the Imprisoned Parents
and all Puerto Rican Children*

*Listen Borinqueno child,
the soul of our country
In you we see the future
of our struggle for independence.
Our homeland is courage and sacrifice,
as Dr. Albizu taught us.
Walk with your heads held high,
because your parents are freedom fighters.
From these cold bars,
we are strengthened,
Knowing no empire can take away
our children's love,
the children who love liberty.
Listen Borinqueno child,
the moment for struggle has come,
with pride and determination
take a gun in one hand
and raise the other high,
To let the world know that our victory must arrive.*

-Dylcia Pagan Morales



*Lolita Lebron with William
Guillermo Pagan Morales*

ALICIA RODRIGUEZ

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, on October 21, 1953. I am the fourth of five children and I am part of a very close working class family. As a family we suffered together the consequences of poverty and racism, and my parents sacrificed to provide us the necessities of life. And even though it was a great sacrifice for my parents, they sent their five children to Catholic schools, thinking that we would receive a good education there. But even in those schools we were not protected from racism or given an education that could really give us consciousness.

I was definitely influenced by my family life and by the conditions that surrounded me. They both developed patriotic feelings in me, as well as love and respect for life. These experiences also awakened my defiance and pride in being a woman. They created rebelliousness in the face of the abuses and suffering of people around me.

I hope you can see that my life is based in appreciation for the natural environment (where human beings lead their lives), as well as a curiosity and respect for its laws. This curiosity brought me to the university to study chemistry, biology and mathematics. I never let racist attitudes detour me. For example, I did not let myself be affected by a professor who tried to demoralize me by saying I should not waste my time in natural sciences because I was ignorant. This man said this to me without knowing me, simply because I was a woman and a Puerto Rican. I am glad that I was persistent because my interest in natural science was complemented by entering into clandestine work and seeing the force and utility of sciences like chemistry.

Today, on reflection, I see that my contribution in the armed struggle has exposed me to many productive activities that showed me the vulnerability of our enemy. I feel very proud to be able to say that there is a history of work that can point to victories for the Puerto Rican revolutionary forces, a measurable history that shows what can be done if we work.

Finally, as a Prisoner of War, the sacrifices and the discipline inherent in our position have shown me a lot, allowing me to see that victories in revolutionary work — failures, also — are not limited to people or organizations; they affect all the working people as well as their whole Puerto Rican homeland.

Alicia Rodríguez

IDA LUZ RODRIGUEZ

I was born on July 7, 1950, in the beautiful town of Las Mariñas, Puerto Rico — in a Puerto Rico where the yanki colonial system has only served to make the conditions harder for the people to obtain the necessities of life in all its forms. As a consequence of this reality, my family was forced to emigrate to the U.S. in 1952 to join my father, who had emigrated the year before.

Therefore since 1952, my formative years, my experiences, my studies and my human relationships have all been forged within this capitalist, racist and sexist country. Because of this, my evolution as a Puerto Rican woman and the daughter of workers naturally brought me to accept the decision to participate in the revolutionary process — this process that was born from the roots that colonialism/imperialism planted forcibly and violently in our homeland. It is a process that will continue until the working people achieve their independence and socialism.

I will say that my participation in revolutionary work led me to understand very early that romantic notions play no part in the liberation process. For example, in 1976 I was forced, along with my husband Oscar López and Berti (Carlos Alberto) and Haydée Torres, to disappear and continue our work from clandestinity. This decision separated me abruptly from my beloved son Damian, who at that time was less than 4 years old. And while I was living in clandestinity I had a particular experience that literally brought me to the shadow of death.

I want to say here that there is a reason why I bring these things to light, and that is that experiences like these taught me to understand the potential in every person, and specifically the potential that lives in every Puerto Rican woman. In the same way that I have been able to, another woman can. My experiences in the struggle have given me a better understanding of women's contributions during the long and difficult revolutionary process for Puerto Rico. And my participation has made me aware that we can achieve our revolutionary objectives if we act with bravery, sweat and sacrifice. These are born from equality, comradeship and revolutionary principles.

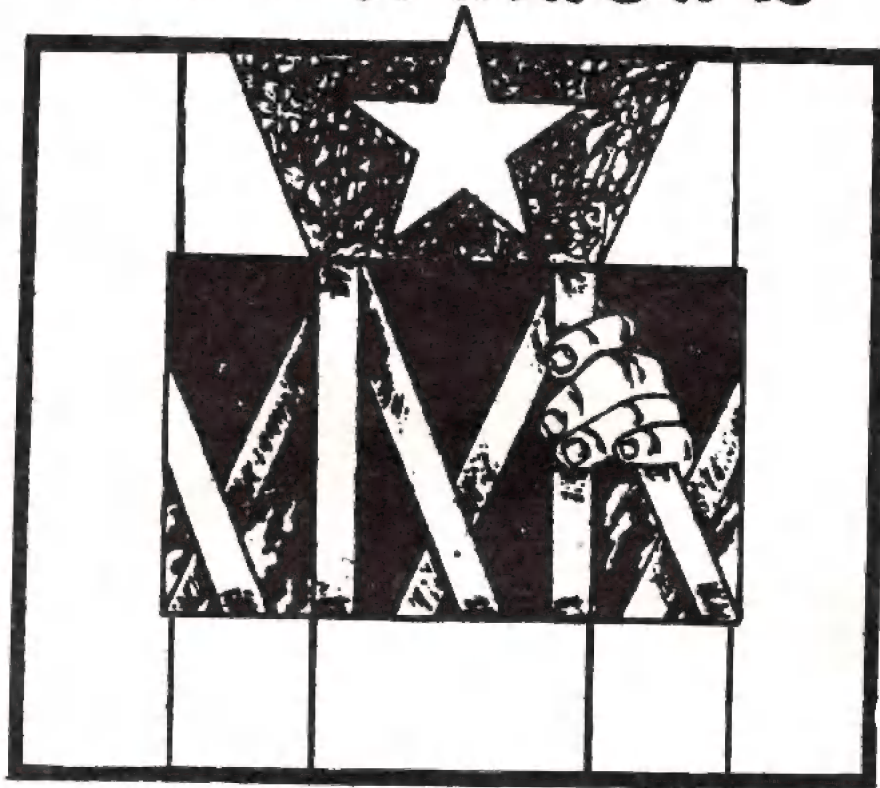
Today I am a Prisoner of War. In reality this is the result of my participation in the clandestine armed struggle. Now I want to emphasize that my actions are not just reserved for exceptional people. I am not exceptional. But I am a woman who has been able to internalize and take actions for the truth — while capitalism/imperialism rules it endangers even the survival of life in all its forms. In fact, as a mother, wife and comrade, necessity has forced me to struggle; and I believe that this same necessity affects all Puerto Ricans. I also think that we all share a historical responsibility, a responsibility to this whole process we now call nature, which demands the unity of our forces to drive our enemy from the face of the Puerto Rican soil and in this way take destiny in our own hands — the hands of the working people.

Ida Luz Rodríguez

"What happens to us does not matter. What matters is that Independence and Socialism for Puerto Rico are inevitable".

Statement by Alicia Rodriguez, Puerto Rican POW, at her sentencing.

SON PATRIOTAS



NO TERRORISTAS

"They are Freedom Fighters, Not Terrorists".

Without a doubt, it is necessary to learn to study and analyze in a scientific manner the conditions that surround us so as to acquire the formation of correct and concrete ideas that will serve as our guide. But, it would be useless if we didn't possess the courage and sacrifice needed for the realization of our independence and justice.

Ida Luz Rodriguez

CARMEN VALENTIN

Carmen Valentín is one of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, and is currently held captive in Dwight Correctional Center in Dwight, Illinois. She received a 95 year sentence, the longest of all the Prisoners of War. The judge was particularly vengeful in her case, and said that "she showed no remorse whatsoever." A letter from her co-workers at the YMCA Community College in Chicago expresses who Carmen is:

"We, faculty at Central YMCA who have worked closely with Carmen Valentín, wish to express our outrage at an article called "Ex-Chicago teacher called 'god-mother' of the F.A.L.N." Ms. Valentín has proved by her compassionate caring for all students — Black, Greek, Iranian, Arab, White, African, or Spanish — that she is a thoughtful and kind woman. She is our co-worker and she earned the respect of those who were privileged to work with her. Ms. Valentín is a patriot and has never concealed her concerns about conditions in Puerto Rico and of Puerto Ricans in the United States. The article indicates that wherever Ms. Valentín went, there were "bloody student riots." According to this line of thinking, any teacher who works with minority people could be associated with "bloody riots." Sooner or later oppressed people will rebel. This rebellion is caused by conditions, not by 'sinister godmothers.' " (Signed by 25 of Carmen's co-workers).

Carmen's statement after being convicted of seditious conspiracy clearly shows her revolutionary commitment to her people:

"Your press, your justice system, your repressive forces, your government has branded us as terrorists. But the word terrorist no longer means to the Puerto Rican nation what it used to. Instead of arousing fear or censure, terrorism is a call to action. To be called a terrorist by our enemy is an honor to any citizen; for this means he or she is fighting with a gun in their hand against the monstrosity of the present government and the suffering it causes."

To Our Revolutionary Children

A Nuestros Hijos Revolucionarios

*Hijos de la patria nuestra
Hijos de la lucha armada
Siempre listos, siempre fuertes,
Pues pronto dara la hora.*

*Nosotros los abonamos
Con el abono del rifle
Y ahora esperamos ansiosos
Los frutos de la victoria.*

*Nosotros los adoramos
Sinonimo con la patria
Y al mismo tiempo esperamos
Que nos traigan libertad.*

*Mañana sera muy tarde
El pueblo no va a esperar
Levantense Borinqueñitos
Que hemos dado la señal.*

*Hijos de la patria nuestra
Hijos de la libertad
Nunca sufran, siempre rían
Y burlen la burguesía
que nos cortó la alegría.*

To Our Revolutionary Children

*Children of our country,
Children of armed struggle,
Always ready, always strong,
Soon your moment will come.*

*We strengthen you
With the rifle's seed;
We now anxiously await
The fruits of victory.*

*We adore you,
Identical with our homeland;
At the same time we wait for
You to bring us liberty.*

*Tomorrow will be very late
The people will not wait
Arise Borinqueñitos,
We have given the sign.*

*Children of our homeland,
Sons and daughters of liberty,
Never suffer, always laugh,
And mock the bourgeoisie
That cut short our joy.*

--Carmen Valentín



Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, May 1st, International Workers Day, 1981.

Conspiración

*Mientras en mi exista todavía un respiro,
Yo conspiro.
Mientras mi espíritu pueda todavía cavalgar
Mientras mi brazo pueda todavía levantar
una pluma, un fusil,
Yo seré sutil!
Mientras exista el le-lo-lai, la palma, el flamboyán
Mientras el pueblo esté presente,
Y halla gente
Cuenta conmigo, pues yo estaré al frente.
Mientras yo pueda respirar,
Yo podré conspirar.
Mientras las masas exijan protección
Y mientras el pueblo pida acción,
Estaré yo a tu lado, no habrá separación.
Habrá conspiración!
Mira hacia el sol, el mar, el universo,
Mientras estos existan, estaré yo en el verso
de cada guerrillero que camina disperso,
buscando entre otras cosas
tu libertad ansiosa.
Mientras este gusano americano
Siga en largos plazos
dictando nuestros pasos
Estréchame en tus brazos
No habrá otra solución
Habrá conspiración!*

—Carmen Valentín

Conspiracy

*While there is a breath still left in me,
I will engage in conspiracy.
While my spirit still can run,
While my arm can raise a gun,
or my hand a pen still lift,
I will be secret, subtle, swift.*

*As long as you can hear the "le-lo-lai"
As long as palm trees and the flamboyant still survive
So long as my people answer the call --
Count on me, at the front, with you all.
As long as I can breathe,
I will conspire.*

*While the masses demand protection
and the people cry out for action
I will stand beside you, not separately --
There will be conspiracies!*

*Look toward the sun, the universe, the sea
As long as these exist, then in the poem
of each guerrilla walking in your midst,
There I will be, seeking freedom, eagerly.*

*As long as these American worms
Continue to dictate the terms
Hold me in your arms.
There's no other remedy --
But CONSPIRACY!*

--Carmen Valentín

Jamás Seré Traidora

*En el proceso largo de la liberación
puedo quizás perder mi vida,
puedo pasar días hambrienta, adolorida,
puedo ser maltratada, destruida
Pero jamás seré traidora y venenosa.*

*Durante este viaje largo y tormentoso
Puedes, o enemigo cruel,
Tratar de robar nuestra patria,
de violar nuestra cultura,
Llenar diariamente tus cuevas carceleras
con nuestra sangre joven y fértil,
Puedes terrorizar al mundo con tus
mentiras sobre nuestro ideal.
Pero jamás podrás contar conmigo
Jamás seré traidora y venenosa.*

*O enemigo cruel, puedes robarme al hijo
de mi vida,
deprivarme de todo ser querido,
Quitarme todo,
Humillarme frente al mundo
Pero jamás seré traidora y venenosa.*

*¡O Patria de mi vida,
Por ti he vivido y sabré vivir
Sin ti soy nadie, es mejor morir
O Patria de mi alma
alegre estoy
Pues tuya soy
Y hacia la victoria voy!*

-Carmen Valentín

I Will Never Be a Traitor

*In the long process of liberation
I can perhaps lose my life,
I can spend days hungry and dismayed,
I can be mistreated or destroyed,
But I will never be a poisonous traitor.*

*During this long and anguished journey
You can -- Oh cruel enemy! --
try to steal our homeland,
to rape our culture,
to fill your jails and dungeons daily
with our young and fertile blood;
You can terrorize the world
with lies about our cause.
But you will never be able to count on me.
I will never be a poisonous traitor.*

*Oh, cruel enemy! you can rob me of the son
of my life,
deprive me of every loved one,
isolate me entirely,
humiliate me before the world --
But I will never be a poisonous traitor.*

*Oh! Homeland of my life,
For you I have lived and will know how to live.
Without you I am nothing, it is better to die;
Oh! Homeland of my soul
I am joyous
for I am yours
and I am heading towards victory!*

-- Carmen Valentín



Drawing by Dylcia Pagan Morales, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, while in prison.

MARCH ON

Although this book has focused on revolutionary Puerto Rican women, their struggle for liberation is inseparable from the overall struggle for Puerto Rican independence and socialism. In a prison interview, Haydée Torres explained how the process of making revolution together lays the basis for the liberation and equality of all Puerto Rican people:

"We shouldn't say 'Well, I think that we should first figure out how things could be more equal for men and women before we struggle together for revolution.' In fighting together, in standing side by side with our compañeros, I think I have done a lot more for the equality of women. If we can say that in fighting together we are fighting to rid our society of the inequalities, the inequality of women is one of the inequalities we are fighting to rid ourselves of. And when we fight, we learn something about ourselves; so that when we build something new, it is going to be built differently. It's not going to be built the way what we were raised in was built, it's going to be something good, it's going to be just, and it's going to be human."

"March On", written by Luis Rosa, one of the men POW's, both affirms the strength of the compañeras' ability to fight, to lead, and to create the new Puerto Rico. The poem is the result of a political struggle which he waged with his mother to move beyond support for him simply as her son, and to support him based upon his political ideas. Puerto Rican independence will be won by men and women like the 11 Prisoners of War, by patriots dedicated to the freedom of their nation.

March On

Mothers

*Don't cry -- it is not time for tears
you have cried long enough
for eighty-two years.*

*Don't pray -- prayers go unanswered,
your knees grow sore.
you have run out of cheeks
to be slapped.*

*Don't weaken -- when it is time to build
strength -- to increase the
range and desires to be free.*

continued on the next page

"March On" continued

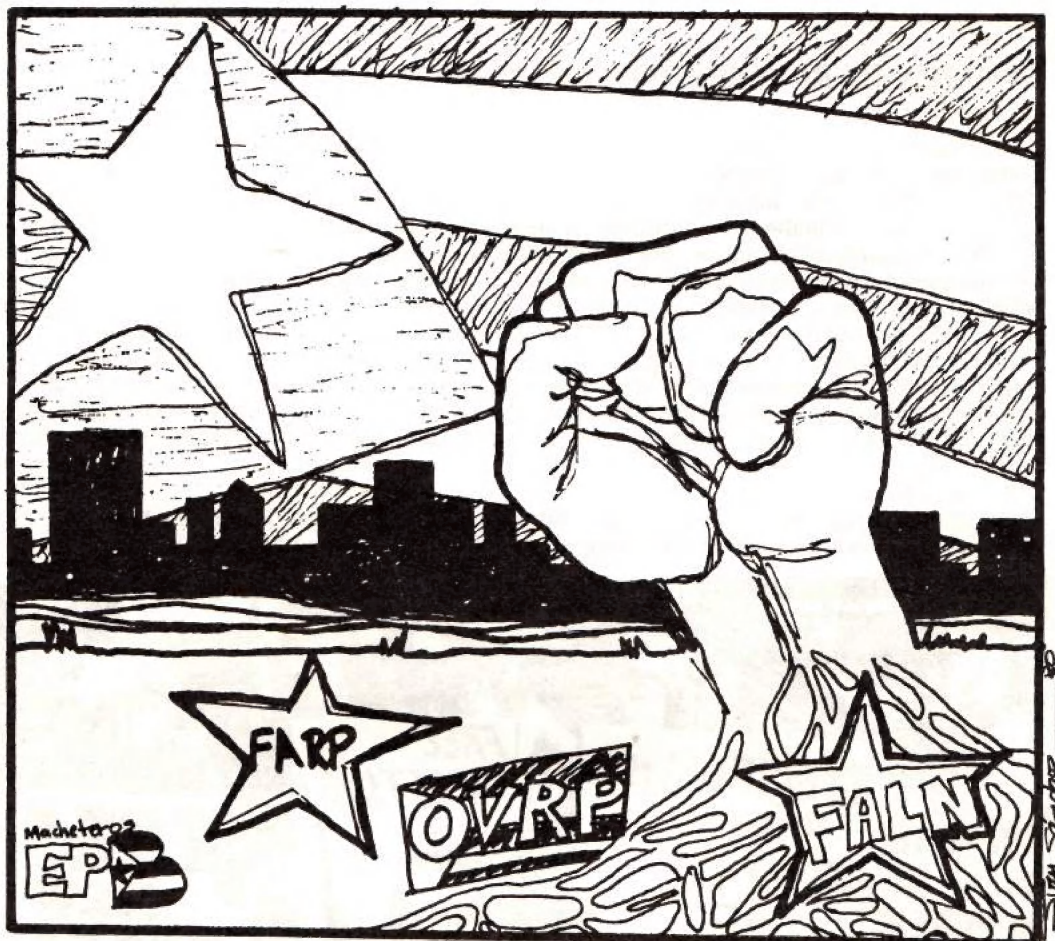
Arise
pick up knowledge and understanding
lead the family, community, the
people

pick up my gun, that I left in a corner
for this moment --
polish it and strap it on your back and...

March
follow the footsteps which I left behind
as an example down the road toward
freedom. When you come to the last step
I left behind -- continue and renew the
path --
creating new steps for others --
for me to follow
I won't be far behind

Mothers
it is not time for tears, prayers and weakness
it is time for strength
commitment
and reaffirmation
it is time for Revolution
March on
I am not far behind -- I am at your side.

--Luis Rosa, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War



Our incarceration has not halted the revolutionary process. We have been in jail since April 4, and yet the Organizacion de Voluntarios por la Revolucion Puertorriquena (OVRP) knocked out of commission the key communication and navigational towers of the U.S. military command in the Caribbean. We have been in jail since April 4 and the struggle continues as demonstrated by the political military undertaking of the Ejercito Popular Boricua-Macheteros, which successfully destroyed ten Yanqui military planes on Muniz base in San Juan, Puerto Rico. And the list goes on and on...

We reiterate to the Puerto Rican nation our call for a Revolutionary Bloc. Unity is exemplified by the Puerto Rican revolutionary clandestine organizations: the FALN, FARP, EPB-Macheteros, and the OVRP.

In the end the Yanquis will do with us what they can get away with. It does not matter. The die has been cast. Puerto Rico will be free whether the Yanquis wish it or not.

Statement by Puerto Rican POW's, Chicago, IL, February 2, 1981.

WOMEN IN REVOLUTION CAMPAIGN

This poetry book has been produced by the Women's Committee of the New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism, as part of our participation in the "Women in Revolution Campaign." This campaign is a year-long effort to build the anti-imperialist women's movement in the U.S., strengthen women's political and material support for national liberation movements inside and outside current U.S. borders, and struggle for a correct revolutionary analysis of women's oppression and strategy for women's liberation. We view the liberation of women as a fundamental goal of any revolution. We see it occurring only through women's full participation in revolutionary struggle, and the total revolutionary transformation of society.

The Women in Revolution Campaign began in San Francisco, Ca., on International Women's Day, March 8, 1982, with an anti-imperialist women's demonstration in solidarity with freedom fighters. The campaign will entail a year-long series of activities, tours, and demonstrations, focusing particular attention on women freedom fighters and Prisoners of War. It will culminate in 1983 with an anti-imperialist International Women's Day demonstration coordinated internationally, across the U.S. and in Europe.

For more information on the campaign, and to get involved, please contact the Women's Committee of the New Movement in Solidarity with the Puerto Rican and Mexican Revolutions.





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